

Ten predictions for 2016

What will be the biggest news events of 2016? Here are 10 predictions for what the next 12 months have in store.

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What will be the big news stories and events of 2016? Below is my annual list of 10 predictions.

But first, take a look at [the predictions I made this time](#) a year ago I think I did fairly well, although there are some obvious mistakes.

I called the Nigerian election wrong. And I failed to predict the dramatic events which have shaken Europe; the terror attacks on Paris in January and November, and the huge influx of refugees, mainly from Syria.

Anyway, here are some predictions [educated guesses might be more accurate] on what could happen in 2016.

1. It's an [US presidential election](#) year. Donald Trump will not be the Republican candidate, but whoever is will be beaten by Hillary Clinton in November. Across the world allies of the US, which have looked on with increasing concern at the Republican Party's policies on climate change and the Iran nuclear deal, and bewilderment over its domestic positions on gun control, healthcare and taxation, will breathe a sigh of relief.
2. Britain will vote in a referendum on whether to leave the EU. There will be bitter divisions within the governing Conservative Party, and the tabloid newspapers will fight desperately hard to convince Britons to vote in favour of a [Brexit](#). But the British will decide, by a narrow margin, to stay in the EU. This time the sighs of relief will come from Washington, but also Brussels and Berlin.
3. In Syria there are reasons to believe that 2016 may be a year of dramatic change after five years of

grinding war. The increased urgency of international diplomacy, a response both to the refugee crisis and also to the threat of ISIL, suggest that the status quo will not be sustainable for much longer. I don't know how events will actually play out through the complex and deadly web of national and international interests, but I believe ISIL will continue to lose territory in both Syria and Iraq ... and that some sort of ceasefire will be signed to end the worst of the fighting in the west of the country.

[INSIDE STORY: A roadmap to peace in Syria?](#)

- 4.** I believe Spain will require another general election in 2016, after the inconclusive vote of December 2015, that made it impossible for any political party or group of parties to form a strong or cohesive government.
- 5.** Rio de Janeiro hosts the Olympic Games. The US will top the medal table, followed by China, as in London four years ago. Russia will be allowed to compete, despite the doping scandal. Unfortunately, the Games will be played out against a backdrop of social discontent in Brazil, fuelled by corruption and a worsening economy.
- 6.** In Uganda, President Yoweri Museveni will celebrate 30 years in power with victory in yet another election. His Zimbabwean counterpart, Robert Mugabe, is another ageing autocrat with no intention of going anywhere. But 2016 will be marked by fighting within the ruling Zanu-PF over the succession. Mugabe's wife, Grace, will become increasingly assertive and powerful.
- 7.** Oil prices will stay low all year, much to the consternation of countries such as Nigeria, Angola, Venezuela and Russia. But what of the big Arab oil producers such as Saudi Arabia? If the commitments made at the COP21 summit in December 2015 are to mean anything, much of their precious black stuff will have to remain in the ground in the decades to come.
- 8.** Looking for good news in this troubled world? Keep an eye on Cyprus, an island divided since 1974. "The Cyprus Problem" has defeated international diplomats for decades, but there are hopeful signs that Greek and Turkish leaders on the island are actually serious about reunification.
- 9.** The European Football Championships this summer will be won by the World Champions, Germany, whose team still has youth and vitality. But it will be Wales, in their first international tournament in almost 50 years, who will capture the admiration of fans around the world with a series of sparkling displays.
- 10.** Finally - and here my heart perhaps rules my head - the English Premiership will be won by ... Arsenal, ending a painful 12-year wait.

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